

Voices from the Range



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— BY —
★ ★ RHODA SIVELL ★ ★



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Sivell, Rhoda (Cosgrave) 1875?-1962

Born in Dublin, came with her family to White-wood, Sask.; her father was one of the six jurors at the trial of Louis Riel; married a rancher near Medicine Hat, 1899; during husband's illness had to ride the range, during which time she cultivated the muse; bought two stallions with the proceeds of her volume of verse. (Journal, 22-7-55; 3-2-60; Medicine Hat News, 21-2-62)
Voices from the range. 2263



Voices from the Range



BY
RHODA SIVELL

ILLUSTRATED

PRINTED BY
T. EATON CO. LIMITED
TORONTO AND WINNIPEG

758487

185

465

1911

62

Entered according to Act of Parliament in the year Nineteen
Hundred and Eleven by RHODA SIVELL, Medicine Hat, Alta.

CONTENTS

	Page
THE OLD SASKATCHEWAN - - - -	5
THE WOLF HUNTER - - - - -	6
THE CHINOOK - - - - -	7
MY PRAIRIE FLOWER - - - - -	8
THE BRONCHO BUSTER (Illustrated) - - -	11
THE OUTLAW - - - - -	13
TURNED LOOSE - - - - -	15
THE MOTHERLESS CALF - - - - -	15
HONEY - - - - -	16
HAPPY DAYS - - - - -	17
THE RANGE CALL (Illustrated) - - - -	18
THE HUNTER'S BRIDE - - - - -	21
LITTLE JOE - - - - -	22
LISTEN TO THE COYOTES - - - - -	23
OUR LAST RIDE - - - - -	25

	Page
THE WOOD BY THE SASKATCHEWAN - - -	26
ALBERTA'S ANSWER TO THE "LAW OF THE YUKON" -	27
THE COW-GIRL (Illustrated) . - -	31
ROSES, SWEET WILD ROSES - - -	32
COME TO ME AT SUNSET - - -	33
NATURE'S PRAYER - - -	34
CALLED BACK - - -	35
THE STRAY - - -	36
ONLY A KISS - - -	37
VOICES FROM THE RANGE (Illustrated) - -	38
MY LOST LOVE - - -	41
YOU'RE FAR AWAY - - -	42
GOOD-BYE - - -	42
ALONE - - -	43

Voices from the Range

THE OLD SASKATCHEWAN

Down where the river is winding
Its deep and its lonely way,
By coulee and cut-bank surrounding,
The dark Saskatchewan lay.

And far below in the distance,
The river flats look still,
And the smoke of an Indian teepee
Rises up from a far-off hill.

I hear the cry of the wild geese
As they fly to their evening rest
On the sand-bars of the river
In the wild and the golden west.

And out by the far-off coulees,
Where the evening shadows lie
In the depth of their lonely grandeur,
I hear the lone wolf's cry.

And the coyotes call from the distant range,
Out where the range stock roam,
And the cowboy whoops as he spurs his horse
Down to the old ranch home.

Down by the old Saskatchewan
It's lonely, and wild, and free,
And the old rough range by the river-side
Looks the best in the world to me.

THE WOLF HUNTER

At the dark of evening, when the shadows fall
Out across the bad lands, you can hear them call,
Calling for the round-up, for their evening prey.
Ah, the horses hear them; how they bunch and neigh!

Now the moon has risen, bathes the plain in white;
Oh, how calm and peaceful seems the prairie night;
But what are those shadows leaping o'er the plain?
Ah, the horses see them, snort and bunch again.

O'er the plain they gallop; they are drifting fast,
But the wolves are on them, and it cannot last.
One bright sorrel yearling, with a silver mane,
They have cut her from the bunch, and she squeals with
pain.

Five gaunt wolves are round her running towards a break.
Leaping almost on her; oh, the bounds they take;
And the sorrel yearling, with the silver mane,
Drifting in the moonlight, trembles now with pain.

How the hoofs are ringing on the frozen ground,
Out across the prairie, not another sound
But the running horses. God! but what a sight
For a cowboy hunter in the dead of night!

Just another shadow hurries from the breaks,
Drops upon the prairie, and an aim he takes
At the shadow'd devils leaping o'er the plain.
Then a rifle-shot rings out, and saves the silver mane.

All night long he'd lain there in the frosty night,
Waiting, waiting, waiting for that hellish sight:
Two dead wolves beside him when the dawn breaks grey,
And the sorrel yearling with the bunch that day.

THE CHINOOK

The moon across the hills rose cold last night,
As o'er the snow she shed her silvery light;
The snow birds shivered in the willows bare,
And all the plain was wrapped in wintry air.

As dawn was breaking o'er the prairie wild,
A whisper came, a whisper soft and mild,
That, from the great Pacific far away,
A Chinook warm was stealing on its way.

The sun rose up to meet the welcome guest,
Though not a stranger in our golden West;
The snow birds sang upon the willows bare,
And all the plain it lost its wintry air.

The Chinook rushed across the river dark and deep;
It shook the pine trees on the slippery steep;
It roared o'er chasms deep and coulees wide,
And rushed on along the mountain-side.

Oh, great and mighty Chinook of the West,
Which melts the snow from off the mountain crest!
Which makes our little snow birds gladly sing,
And turns our North West winter into Spring!

MY PRAIRIE FLOWER

Lithe as a reed that the wind doth blow,
Graceful in form was she;
Eyes that shone like the stars of night
When she lifted them up to me.
A face like the rose in summer-time,
Fresh from a summer's shower;
Do you wonder that I loved her,
My own little Prairie Flower?

Her soft hair blows around her face
In a wild and reckless way,
And when she laughs she is joyous,
Just like a child at play.
Her dark eyes sparkle with childish glee,
And yet they are full of power;
Do you wonder that I loved her,
My own little Prairie Flower?

The horses and cattle know her,
Out on the prairie far;
She talks to them in a wild, strange way,
And sings to the evening star.
She calls to the birds at twilight,
In the misty evening hour;
Do you wonder that I loved her,
My own little Prairie Flower?

We stood by the river at evening,
When the mists crept in from the plain,
And I told her I'd love her forever,
And I kissed her again and again.
She wound her soft arms around me;
She was mine for one short hour,
And then I lost her forever;
My own little Prairie Flower.

The mists have filled the valley,
And all the plain is gloom,
For up by the yonder hillside
Lies my darling's snow-white tomb;
And my heart is lonely and broken,
And lies in that leafy bower
Up by the yonder hillside grave
With my little Prairie Flower.





THE BRONCHO BUSTER

THE BRONCHO BUSTER

He came up from old Mexico.
I couldn't rightly say
What was his nationality,
But I'll tell the tale this way:
I think he was half Spaniard;
He spoke the language swell;
Black was his hair and curly,
And black were his eyes as well.

His face was tanned by Southern suns;
His features fine and neat;
His build was strong and supple—
You bet he looked a treat!
But what's a man to look at
If he's only there for show?
A man must do a few things well,
And then he must not blow.

And Dick could handle horses,
He hadn't any fear;
And that's the only kind of man
A range horse will let near.
For I've seen them strike at others,
Just because they were afraid.
A horse can size a man up fast,
And show you how he's made.

I've seen Dick throw and tie them down,
And cinch the saddle tight
In three short minutes—all the time
The horse was on the fight—
And then he'd slip the rope off,
The horse was free to go;
But Dick was in the saddle—
With the horse a-rearing so.

And he'd ride him to a finish,
Though he'd buck, and twist, and squeal,
And plunge around in circles,
Enough to make you reel.

But Dick was in the saddle,
And he sure was there to stay,
And you'd hear him laughing all the time
In a wild and reckless way.

I've seen him busting three or four,
Inside two hours or so—
Range horses that had never had
A saddle on I know.
And never have I seen him piled.
I'd hate to see the day,
That Dick lay piled upon the ground,
And let his horse away.

For I've got a great respect for Dick,
Just like the horses had.
It only takes a coward round
To make a horse real bad.
They've got to show their feelings,
And it's only right and true,
That a horse won't have a coward round
To show him what to do.

And he was gentle with them;
They'd get to like him so;
They'd follow him around
The old corrals, you know.
He'd talk so softly to them:
Look down into their eyes;
Call them his own honies,
And they didn't seem surprised.

We'll take our hats off to him, boys,
For he's the only kind
Range horses have respect for—
Just naturally bound to mind.
That kind is gentle with them;
They keep their temper so;
They haven't got a bit of fear,
And you never hear them blow.

THE OUTLAW

Just a cowboy outlaw, hunted like a thief,
Came he to my ranch door, asking for relief.
How well I remember on a summer's day,
Just a cowboy outlaw I could give away.

Just a cowboy outlaw with a boyish face,
Dark eyes flashing fearlessly, and such reckless grace;
Asking me for shelter, but I knew just then,
Up the river yonder were six mounted men.

They would soon be back again, and would surely find
Just the man they were after and had left behind.
Then he laughed a reckless laugh, and, crawling out, says,
"Say,
Guess you're like the rest up here, would give a boy away."

"Tell me first," I answered, "tell me if it's true,
The most awful thing of all that they say of you.
Tell me if you've killed a man, tell me if it's true,
For, if you have, then go at once; I never will shield you."

Then his eyes flashed on me, looked me straight and true:
"No, my God, I never did! I'll swear it now to you.
Do they say that of me? Well, it is a lie!
Let the red coats come right here. I'm not afraid to die."

Just a cowboy outlaw, but I asked no more
Than the oath he swore me by that old ranch door.
Turning away from him, food I quickly found,
And, calling him to follow me, along the stony ground.
"By the river bend," I said, "just one mile away,
There's a cave I know of where you've got to stay."

Then I said good-bye to him, and left him all alone,
For I knew that I must not be found away from home.
But I see that outlaw as I saw him then,
Weary, sad and lonely, hunted down by men.

Lying in the coulees, in the damp of night;
Starting from his slumber, looking round in fright;
Stranded on the prairie, not a horse to ride;
Eighty miles to go on foot to the "Other Side."

Then his broken words of thanks, when he said "Good-bye;"
Thanking me for what I'd done when yet the boy might die.
No one near to help him, I left him all alone;
Standing in the doorway of the cut-bank alone.

Hunted down by red coats; did it seem quite right?
Six to one, and he on foot, was not a stand-up fight.
How well I remember on that summer day,
Six to one, and then for me to give the boy away.

Back again at the ranch house three mounted men I found,
Searching through the buildings, looking all around
For the cowboy outlaw; "He'll surely hang," said they,
But I thanked God that that lonely boy was safe one mile
away.

Hunted down by red coats like a common thief,
Came he to my ranch door asking for relief.
Did I wrong to help him? "Yes," the law would say,
But God alone shall be my judge upon the round-up day.

Then the strays and outlaws will all be rounded in
With the bunch that's Branded, who think they've got no
sin;
God alone will cut them out, on that round-up day.
But I think that, after all, He'll just leave in that stray.

These were just the ones He loved best of all, we know;
Whom He suffered most for in this world below.
Will He let these stray ones go, that He loved so well?
Did He die to send them to everlasting hell?

No, oh no! He'll save them in His own grand way;
He will hold the outlaw, and will brand the stray
At that last great round-up, where we all must stand,
Waiting for our Master. We don't know His brand.

TURNED LOOSE

The wild birds are singing in the willows by the hills,
And the horses' hoofs are ringing on the plain;
The range calves are calling to their mothers by the creeks,
And the cows are answering back to them again.

We left the town behind us in the cut-banks far below,
Where for months we had been tied to city life.
We've pulled the halters off us, and turned us loose for
home.

Far away from all the city's care and strife.

The waters sparkle in the creeks, the river's running high;
Along the sky is shining brightest blue;
The flowers are all in blossom, the trees are all in leaf,
And all the sounds of nature's calling you.

Yes, she's calling you across the hills, where the blue-
joint's springing green,

And the range where you've located comes in view,
And the air is strong and sweet, and your life it seems
complete,

When you answer to the things that're calling you.

THE MOTHERLESS CALF

Only a day! You poor little calf,
With the brown and glossy head!
Only a day on the old rough ranch,
And your dear old mother dead.

We put you up close beside her,
And, although she was weak and sick,
She lifted her head to her little one,
And gave you a loving lick.

We put you away in the old cow's stall;
We made you warm and dry;
We gave you milk of the best to drink,
But we could not stop your cry.

The little motherless heifer,
Out in the old rough shed,
Is the pick of the bunch with my pard and I,
Because her mother is dead.

HONEY

Won't you meet me by the river, my own Honey?
Across the old range I will ride to-night,
And I'll wait by the big bend of the river,
When the prairie moon is shining soft and bright,
The blue birds will be sleeping in the willows,
And they'll not hear what I have to say.
I want you, oh, my Honey, how I want you,
In my little lonely ranch so far away!

I'm tired of living all alone, my Honey,
And the only girl I ever loved is you,
So meet me by the river, my own Honey,
And to my prairie girl I will be true.
Your rider he is waiting by the river,
And you must hear what he has got to say,
For he has ridden ninety miles across the range
From his little lonely ranch so far away.

So when the prairie moon is shining brightly,
And all the stars are sparkling up above,
Then meet me by the river, my own Honey,
And let your rider teach you how to love.
The blue birds are sleeping in the willows,
So they'll not hear what I have got to say.
I want you, my Honey, how I want you,
In my lonely little ranch so far away.

You remember where I met you first, my Honey,
By the big bend?—I'll be waiting there to-night;
You were rounding up some range stock by the river,
And you asked me if I'd cinch your saddle tight.
Then I helped you gather up the old stray stock,
You might have thought I hadn't much to say,
But ever since I've wanted you, my Honey,
In my lonely little ranch so far away.

So meet me by the river, my own Honey,
And to my prairie girl I will be true,
When every other feeling's dead within me,
I know I'll have a feeling there 'or you.
Your rider, he will love you, dear, for ever.
If the whole wide world were standing in my way,
I would take you, my own Honey, I would take you
To my little lonely ranch so far away.

HAPPY DAYS

The bells in the town are ringing,
 'Tis Christmas time we know,
But not a sound of the bells we hear
 Across the shifting snow.
Across the wind-swept prairie,
 Where the wild chinook winds blow.

'Tis Christmas night, and we're far away,
 From all we love and know,
But faces are bright, and hearts are light,
 Outside is the drifting snow.
And we talk, and laugh, and sing with joy,
 Out where the chinooks blow.

It's Christmas night, and they drink a toast
 To the loved one, far away;
One to the boys from the sunny South,
 And one for the old range ways;
But the one we all love best of all
 When they call out "Happy Days."

'Tis Christmas night on the old wild range,
 And the Northern Lights aglow,
Dance o'er the grim and grey cut-banks,
 And down on the shifting snow.
And the coyote sneaks by the frozen creeks,
 And the wolf calls long and low.
But the toast on the range is "Happy Days,"
 Out where the riders go.

THE RANGE CALL

I'm lonely to-night for the old range,
And the voices I loved to hear,
Though the band in the town is playing,
And the music comes soft to my ear.
There's only the river between us,
And the town in the flat shows bright,
But I'm lonely, lonely, lonely,
For my old range home to-night.

I'm lonely to-night for the old friends;
For the new friends can never be
Just what those dear old range friends
Have been in the past to me.
But I hear their voices calling,
And the band it has ceased to play,
And my heart has gone out from the gaslit town
To the wild range far away.

If ever you hear the range call,
That voice that speaks soft and sweet;
That wins you back to the prairie,
Away from the gaslit street.
If once you hear her calling,
You sure then have got to go,
For the old range is waiting for you,
And you've got to love her so.



THE RANGE CALL



THE HUNTER'S BRIDE

Winds blow high, winds blow low,
And o'er the mountains steep you go;
The slippery paths where the wild deer leap,
And the eagle soars o'er its rugged steep.

Up the mountain at break of day
A hunter toils his lonely way,
Swift as the deer, which before him spring,
Light as the wild bird on the wing.

The deer spring from their rocky bed,
And the mountain lion doth lightly tread.
The birds fly off in the wild retreat,
When they hear the noise of the hunter's feet.

Down in the valley far away,
When the morning mists hang cold and grey,
A log shack stands by the river side—
It is the house of the hunter's bride.

She stands by the door—sweet and fair—
And the mist clings to her golden hair.
Her eyes are turned to the mountain side,
And her heart is sad for a hunter's bride.

The sun will set with the close of the day,
The wind will drive the mists away,
But the hunter has slipped on the mountain side,
And all alone waits the hunter's bride.

She watches long, but he comes no more
Back to the old log shanty door.
He lies alone on the mountain steep,
And, alone, his bride is left to weep.

Far away, on old England's shore,
She looks back on the year before
When she lived in the shack by the mountain side,
And she was once a hunter's bride.

She clasps his child close to her breast,
"Sleep, my little one, sleep and rest;
Some day we will meet, and part no more,
And I'll be his bride as I was before."

LITTLE JOE

Just a little ranch shack
By the river's brink
Trees all growing round it—
Let me stop and think—
Standing in the doorway
Was a halfbreed child;
Only four was little Joe,
Clean, though dark and wild.

Three days I had been alone,
Not a voice to hear,
Lonely, lonely, lonely,
Only cattle near,
When the little voice came
Through the open door—
From the halfbreed camp had strayed,
Just a child of four.

"Missus, you be lonely?
Joe has come to stay
Wid you, missus, always,
When de man's away;"
And a bunch of roses,
Sweet, and fresh, and wild,
He held out towards me—
Just a halfbreed child.

For hours he would stay there,
And, no matter where I'd go,
Always close beside me
Was faithful little Joe.
And his eyes would sparkle
With such childish glee,
When we'd play together,
The dog, the kid, and me.

All that summer Joe stayed
Faithful, patient, true,
And still I hear his voice say,
"Missus, I love you."
Just a little halfbreed kid,
Clean, though dark and wild,
And for days I'd see no other
But the halfbreed child.

But one day a rider came;
I asked for little Joe.
He looked up at me quickly:
"Say! I thought you'd know!
Why, he died last summer——"
But I heard no more,
As I drifted quickly,
Through the open door.

Years have passed away since then;
Faces fair and sweet
Now are all around me,
And loved ones oft I meet.
But out in the shadows
Of those cut-banks wild,
Ever comes a vision
Of that little faithful child.

LISTEN TO THE COYOTES

Hear the coyotes howling
Out in coulees dark.
Shrilly through the stillness
Comes the coyote's bark.

Dark does seem the river,
Wild, indeed, the night,
And all the hills around us
Are fading from our sight.

Down through pathless coulees,
Looking for her prey,
The old coyote's stealing,
Looking old and grey.

Up by yonder cut-bank,
Over coulees deep,
All her little coyotes
Now are fast asleep.

Now she stops and listens,
And with a wild, weird cry,
Tells the other coyotes
Some range calf must die.

Out upon the prairie,
And at peaceful rest,
Lie a bunch of cattle,
Range stock of the best.

Right within the centre
Are the calves, asleep,
And the cows surround them,
As their watch they keep.

The old coyote's coming,
But you need not fear;
When she hears the outer circle,
She won't come too near.

Fifty pairs of shining horns
In the misty light;
Fifty noses sniff the air,
In that dreary night.

Back through pathless coulees,
Wandering all alone,
Hungry, hungry, hungry,
Nothing to bring home.

But right in her pathway,
In a gully deep,
Lies a poor dead "doggie"
In a broken heap.

Listen to the coyotes,
Out in coulees dark;
Shrilly through the stillness
Comes the coyote's bark.

OUR LAST RIDE

We drifted out West together,
In the light of the dying day;
The town faded far behind us,
Bath'd in its gas light ray.
The smell of the rain-swept prairie
Blew up to us strong and sweet,
And all the music we needed
Was the ring of the unshod feet.

We thought of the days that were over,
We thought of the days that would be,
We thought of the present in silence,
When you'd say good-bye to me.
I see your face in the shadows
Just as I did that night,
Though it's years since we drifted together
Out in that fading light.

The smell of the silver sage brush,
The moan of the Western wind
As it blew around our faces,
It all comes back to my mind.
We said good-bye, and we parted—
Your trail new-cut and strange—
Drifting apart to meet no more—
Our last old ride on the range.

Yet I never see a sunset,
But that ride comes back to me.
In the wave of the silver sage brush
Once more your face I see.
The South wind calls me to you,
Warm, and strong, and sweet,
And your voice is still with me, tender and true,
In the music of unshod feet.

THE WOOD BY THE SASKATCHEWAN

I came, when the dawn was breaking,
To a wood by the river side.
I rode from the far-off ranges
Where the prairie stretches wide.
Looking for stock that had wandered;
Thinking they might have strayed
Down to the wood by the river,
So straight for the wood I made.

I stayed in the wood by the river,
Till the sun rose high on the plain,
And a voice from the range was calling me
Back to my work again.
I forgot for a time my duty,
For the place held joys for me,
And the peace I found by the river
Set my tired spirit free.

The wild doves coo'd in the willows;
No music is half so sweet
As the note of the wild dove cooing
To his mate in that wild retreat.
The song of a thousand wild birds,
As they flitted from tree to tree,
Made joyous that wood by the river,
And its charm hung over me.

The great brown cut-bank towering
Over three hundred feet,
To shelter the wood from the North wind
That the spot might be complete.
The river had wound around it,
And drawn in its close embrace.
I loved the wood by the river,
And the beauty of that place.

When the sun was hot in the heavens,
I rode back out on the plain,
For the voice of duty was calling me
Back to my work again.
But the peace I found by the river,
Followed me all that day.
I've got to locate by that river
So the peace of that place will stay.

ALBERTA'S ANSWER TO THE "LAW OF THE YUKON"

The sun as it rises in splendor,
And sets in a halo of gold,
Over the Western ranges,
Sees some of her greatness unfold.
The land with its wheatfields are golden;
Its thousands of homes on the plain;
Its valleys all teeming with people—
And still we are calling again.

Calling again to the thousands,
And still there is room for them all;
The strong, and the weak, and the suffering,
And we'll see that none of them fall.
Each is treated with fairness,
Everyone here has a show;
We don't take the life from their body,
And then write about them and blow.

We've taken the ones you have ruined,
The frozen, the maimed, the untrue;
We've turned them loose on our ranges,
And now they are stronger than you.
We've taken the drunkards and gamblers,
We've taught them the law of the place;
We've lifted them right from the depth of despair,
And now we are proud of our race.

We've taken the weak and the suffering,
We've tendered them till they were well,
And now they are making a living—
The ones you were sending to hell.
We've remembered the trust of our country;
We've remembered the law of our land;
But you that froze the blood in their veins,
Why—you couldn't understand.

We have with us the ones you have broken,
And the very worst ones in our pay,
Have a home on the rolling prairie;
A home and three square meals a day.
For the mother country trusts us,
And sends them into our care.
How could we look her in the face,
If we didn't treat them square.

She sends us her strong and her noble;
She sends us her brave and her true;
We thank God for her great ones,
But there's room for her weak ones, too,
That they may grow strong on our prairie;
That they may be men of our land.
But you, that froze the blood in their veins,
Why—you couldn't understand.

You froze them and drove them to madness,
And now you are writing to tell
Of the men that you turned into devils,
The bunch you are sending to hell.
You don't hear the mother country
Weeping, ah, weeping, God knows,
For the sons that she lost in the wilds out there,
That froze on your blood-stained snows.

You hear not the law of your Maker,
The trust that He gave to your care.
How will you answer your Maker,
When He asks you to make it square?
When He asks you to give him back again
The souls you have cast away,
And the dead arise to condemn you
On the last great Judgment Day?





THE COW GIRL

THE COW-GIRL

Out on the wild range, riding
To the music of drifting feet;
As we lope o'er the sunburnt prairie,
I and the cow-girl meet.
The sun in the West is setting,
And shoots out its golden beams;
One falls on the face of the rider,
The cow-girl of my dreams.

She's as lithe as the supple willows
That grow by the bed of the streams;
Her hair like the golden sunbeam
That falls on the girl of my dreams.
Her eyes are as dark as the shadows
That creep down the canyon wide;
With a look, like a half-broke broncho,
Half fearful, yet trusting beside.

Her face like the roses in summer
That grow in the coulees deep;
Her lips like the scarlet sand flower
That blossoms in cut-banks steep.
She's as fair as a summer morning;
She's as pure as the prairie air;
She's as wild as the silver sage brush
That grows by the grey wolf's lair.

The sky in the West has darkened
As home to the camp we ride,
And I lope o'er the shadowed prairie
With the cow-girl by my side.
We laugh, and we talk together,
To the music of drifting feet,
As we lope o'er the sunburned prairie,
Where I and the cow-girl meet.

ROSES, SWEET WILD ROSES

Roses, sweet wild roses; crimson, pink and white!
Growing o'er the prairie in the bright sunlight;
Sending out her fragrance o'er the prairie far;
Closing up her petals at the evening star.
Roses, sweet wild roses! What art thou to me?
More than all the prairie flowers that around I see.

Lilies, tall and stately, in their crimson fold,
Striped with black and yellow, lovely to behold.
Marigolds and daisies, blue-bells, violets sweet.
All in wild confusion grow around our feet.
Roses, sweet wild roses! What art thou to me?
More than all the prairie flowers that around I see.

Out upon the prairie, when I was a child,
How I loved to gather my sweet roses wild!
And I'd often talk to them in a childish way,
Just as if they understood all I had to say;
Then I'd take my treasures home, press them in a book,
So when winter days came on I could on them look.

So I see my roses, like friends of bygone days,
Come again across my path like some heavenly rays;
Lifting up the shadows that around me fall.
Friends that never change through years. Friends, true
friends through all.
Friends, dear old friends! What art thou to me?
More than all the new friends that around I see.

COME TO ME AT SUNSET

Come to me at sunset,
When the shadows fall,
Just in that twilight hour
I miss you most of all.
Come to me, my darling,
When your work is done;
And the hills are turned to gold
By the setting sun.

All day long I miss you,
But I must be true,
For I know that every man
Has his work to do.
But when day is over,
Then I love you best;
When the sunset brings you home,
Back to love and rest.

When I look across the years
I have waited so.
Always went to meet you
By the old corrals, you know:
And I see you riding
Down the old hillside,
And the cowboy whoop you'd send
I'd hear it far and wide.

Come to me at sunset,
For I love you best
When the day is over,
And the world's at rest.
Then I'm waiting for you—
How dark this world would be,
If the one I waited for
Did not come to me.

But I know you're coming,
Out across the years;
Not a twinge of trouble
Stirs my heart with fears.
For I know you love me,
Just as I love you,
And I'll never break away
From the love that's bound us two.

NATURE'S PRAYER

Long months have past, and still there is no rain
So brown and dry does seem the far-off plain;
The willows hang with dry and withered leaves,
And dull and listless seem the cotton trees.

The seeds lie dead beneath the sunburnt ground;
The year is late, and still no growth they've found;
And weary hands have toiled to sow that grain,
And wait with patience for the coming rain.

The creeks and springs are now all dry,
And on the plain you hear the range stock cry.
They travel onward to the watering ground,
And when they reach it no water there is found.

Hear, God! oh, hear! It is Nature's prayer
That lifts itself above the dry, hot air;
The calling of the range stock on the plain;
The neighing of the horses for the rain;
The wilted trees; the prairie flowers that die;
The birds that call with that sweet plaintive cry.

Stretch out Thy hand; unlock the drifting cloud,
And speak to Nature with Thy thunder loud.
She knows Thy voice, and she is not afraid,
For well she knows that Thou hast all things made,
Hear, God! oh, hear! and answer Nature's prayer,
That calls to Thee above the dry, hot air.

CALLED BACK

You stayed away all winter,
And I missed you every day;
The range seemed cold and dreary
While you were away.
The wind swept over the hill-tops,
And the swish of the drifting snow,
Down in the valley yonder,
Made me think of long ago.

But the first warm wind of the spring time,
And the soft, sweet, drifting rain,
And the song of the birds by the river
Will call you back again.
Back to the one that loves you;
Back from the mist and snow;
Back to the sweet old summer day;
Back to the long ago.

THE STRAY

Far away on the mountains,
Where the wind is chill and cold,
The feet of the wanderer travels
Far away from the fold.
No light to guide his lonely way,
No path for weary feet.
God of the lost and lonely!
Be with that wandering sheep.

Feet that are sore and weary;
A heart that throbs with woe;
The soul that is lost on the mountain
Wandering to and fro.
No friend to find and bring him back,
Back to the narrow way.
God of the lost and lonely!
Bring back that wandering stray.

God of the lost and lonely!
Find him and bring him home.
God of the broken-hearted!
Tell him no more to roam.
Back from the bleak, wild mountains,
Back to the beaten track.
God of the lost and lonely!
Call him—he will come back.

Over the lonely mountains;
Out on the trackless wild.
God of the lost and lonely!
Bring back that erring child.
Back to the light of heaven,
Back from the valley cold,
Back where the angels are singing,
Back to the heavenly fold.

ONLY A KISS

Only a kiss, a mother's kiss,
Sacred, and pure, and true.
The world would laugh
If you tried to tell
What wonders a kiss would do.
It would bring you back from the path of hell,
That mother's kiss to you.

Down in the depths of black despair,
When the heart is lonely and sad.
Only a kiss from a loving friend,
And your heart again grows glad.
But that friend was true,
And she gave to you
All the proof that she had.

Only a kiss from a stranger,
A careless but loving kiss,
And the orphan's face
Lit up with smiles,
And almost heavenly bliss.
The stranger gave
To that lonely child
What she would never miss.

Only a farewell kiss.
His brow is dark with pain.
Tears fall from her lovely eyes;
They may never meet again.
But if on the battlefield
He should fall,
That last sweet kiss
Would seem dearer than all.

Only a kiss on a fair wife's face
From a husband strong and true,
And all she had suffered was quite forgot,
And she said, "I would die for you."
Only a kiss—the bond of earthly love—
Yet it links us close with the throne above.

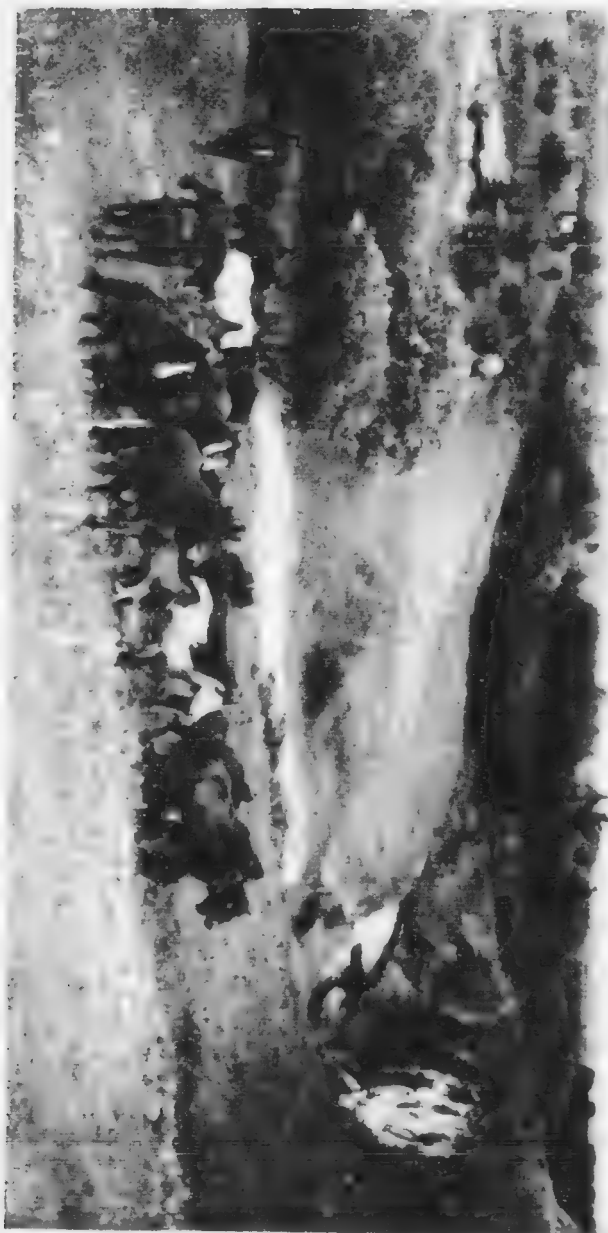
VOICES FROM THE RANGE

There's an old ranch by the river,
Out far across the plain,
Where no city dust blows o'er it,
By the cut-banks washed by rain;
By the big bend of the river,
Where the soft winds whisper low,
And the doves coo in the poplar trees,
And the wild clematis grow.

The meadow larks they sing at dawn,
As the river ripples by,
And out beyond the cut-banks
You can hear the range stock cry;
And the neighing of the horses;
Oh, it all sounds sweet to me,
On the old ranch by the river,
Oh, it's there that I would be.

Then the wolf hunts o'er the prairie;
When all the boys drift in,
We all play cards together—
In town you would call it sin—
Where the stranger is always welcome,
It's there that I would be,
On the old ranch by the river,
Where life is sweet and free.

You can have your city life for me;
Your noisy, dusty town,
Where the gas lights shine all through the day,
And the men they don't tan brown.
But it's hustle, hustle, hustle,
No one there seems free.
But the old range voices call me back,
And it is there that I would be.



VOICES FROM THE RANGE

MY LOST LOVE

Good-bye, my darling! Good-bye, my lost love!
Never again shall I meet you more.
Lost and gone are the days past recalling.
Never again will they seem as before.

Good-bye, my darling! I know we are parted.
Days will seem years when you're gone from my sight;
Life will seem dark and lonely without you.
And all the bright sunlight will change into night.

Good-bye, my darling! But only remember,
If in the future when friends prove untrue,
And fortune has left you alone in your sorrow;
It's then; oh, it's then, that you'll know I am true.

It's then; oh, it's then, that I'll prize you and love you,
I'll hold you, and keep you with love so divine;
When all the world has left you alone, dear;
It's then; oh, it's then, that you'll know I am thine.

In the brightness of life I know you will miss me,
But when clouds roll over your bright sky of blue.
You will long for me, call for me, yearn for me, darling;
It's then; oh, it's then, that you'll know I am true.

Earth holds no sorrow to turn me from you, dear;
Poverty, sickness, disgrace or despair—
All I would share with you gladly forever,
And you would just love me because I was there.

Good-bye, my darling! Good-bye, my lost love!
Angels are weeping for me and for you.
When we stand at the Throne of God's holy presence;
It's then; oh, it's then, that you'll know I am true.

When you hold my hand in the pure light of heaven,
The darkness of earth all forgotten and past,
And the angels are singing, because we are happy,
Because we are happy, my lost love, at last.

YOU'RE FAR AWAY

You're far away, and I know you miss me;
I hear you calling me soft and low;
I hear your voice through the misty shadows—
Would, my darling, that I could go!

You're far away, and I know you're lonely;
My place in your heart no one can fill;
You're longing for me and the night is dreary,
And days that shone brightest have grown chill.

You're far away, but I know you're thinking—
Thinking of days that have passed away.
No more shall we, when the moon is rising,
Stand by the river at the close of day.

You're far away, but I know you love me.
Don't call me, darling! I must not go!
The shadows round me they seem to darken.
Oh! Tell me! Why have I loved you so?

GOOD-BYE

Loving words will fade from memory,
Gentle words will seem less dear;
Warm, sweet lips that spoke the message,
Will seem unreal when they're not near.
But there's one that lives for ever,
When all others are forgot;
Days and years, and place and distance,
Endless time will change it not;
In your thoughts it lives for ever,
And that lonely heart must sigh.
No one ever can forget it—
The beloved's last good-bye.

Years will pass, and time will change us;
Eyes grow dim with age and care;
Faces worn with many a sorrow;
Silver in the golden hair.
Feet will falter at the hillside,
Where they used to climb of yore;
Mind grow dull, and memory fail us;
Heart be broken, sick and sore.
But in thought it lives for ever,
Though the lonely heart may sigh.
No one ever can forget it—
The beloved's last good-bye.

ALONE

I stand alone. The storms around me sweep.
The darkness gathers fast.
I hear the mighty roar of torrents on the steep
Across the mountain pass.
Alone! Alone! No one to hold my hand,
So alone I stand!

The cold wind sweeps across my face.
The dawn breaks wild.
I tremble in my loneliness
Like some lost child.
Alone! Alone, some time we each must be,
Before we reach that great eternity.



